



19 March 2014

Farming Statistics - Livestock Populations at 1 December 2013, United Kingdom

This release shows livestock numbers on agricultural holdings in the United Kingdom. Data come from various different sources, full details of which are provided in the methodological notes on page 7.

Key points:

Cattle ([Table 1 and 2](#))

Between December 2012 and December 2013, the total number of cattle and calves in the UK decreased by 0.7% to 9.7 million.

Pigs ([Table 3](#))

The total number of pigs in the UK increased by 4.0% since December 2012 to nearly 4.4 million. This goes against the downward trend in the UK's pig population since 2009.

Sheep ([Table 4](#))

The total number of sheep and lambs in the UK decreased by 1.6% during 2013 to 22.6 million animals. The UK's female breeding flock increased by 4.0% to 14.8 million in 2013.

Revisions

Please note that Scotland have now changed to using the Cattle Tracing System data as their data source for cattle, as is already done in England and Wales. UK cattle figures from 2007 have been revised accordingly. On average, this revision has resulted in an increase of 0.3% on the UK's previously published figures for total cattle and calves. Scotland have also revised their survey imputation methodology, and this has caused smaller changes in the figures for pigs and sheep. See their methodological notes on page 7 for further explanation.

Figures for livestock populations in England were published separately from those for the UK this year, and they can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-statistics-livestock-populations-at-1-december-2013-england>

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Detailed results

Cattle

The total number of cattle and calves in the UK fell by 0.7% to 9.7 million between December 2012 and December 2013. The UK's dairy herd remained static at 1.8 million for another year and the UK's beef herd continues to decrease, falling by 3.0% to under 1.6 million.

Table 1: Cattle and calves on agricultural holdings on 1 December

	thousands					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013 / 2012
Total cattle and calves	9 945	9 924	9 692	9 749	9 682	-0.7
All female cattle	7 167	7 188	7 054	7 062	7 013	-0.7
Aged 2 years or more	4 292	4 302	4 164	4 128	4 126	-0.1
Total breeding herd	3 465	3 481	3 412	3 388	3 371	-0.5
Beef herd	1 616	1 649	1 630	1 603	1 554	-3.0
Dairy herd	1 849	1 832	1 783	1 786	1 817	1.7
Other female cattle	827	821	752	740	755	2.1
Beef	408	398	335	346	353	2.0
Dairy	418	423	417	394	402	2.1
Aged between 1 and 2 years	1 391	1 364	1 352	1 394	1 396	0.1
Beef	907	854	835	861	852	-1.1
Dairy	484	510	516	532	543	2.1
Less than 1 year	1 485	1 521	1 538	1 540	1 491	-3.1
All male cattle	2 777	2 736	2 638	2 687	2 669	-0.7
Aged 2 years or more	370	348	303	305	342	12.2
Aged between 1 and 2 years	1 052	1 021	985	1 001	1 015	1.4
Less than 1 year	1 356	1 367	1 350	1 381	1 312	-5.0

Scotland have now started to use the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) as the source for cattle data in December 2013, and they revised their cattle time series back to 2007. The impact of Scotland's revisions to the UK's cattle data series are shown in Table 2 of this release. The 'percentage changes' in that table show the impact of the revisions.

Table 2: Original UK Cattle time series prior to Scotland's revisions and the percentage change for the main cattle categories.

	thousands			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Previously published figures				
Total cattle and calves	9 901	9 896	9 675	9 726
Beef herd	1,622	1 660	1 642	1 629
Dairy herd	1 864	1 847	1 800	1 802
Percentage change on previous figures				
Total cattle and calves	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Beef herd	-0.4%	-0.6%	-0.8%	-1.6%
Dairy herd	-0.8%	-0.8%	-1.0%	-0.9%

Pigs

The total number of pigs in the UK increased by 4.0% during 2013 to nearly 4.4 million, which goes against the fall in the UK's pig population since 2009. The total number of breeding pigs in the UK decreased by 2.4% to 497 thousand animals by December 2013. The total number of fattening pigs in the UK increased by 4.8% (155 thousand animals) to 3.9 million pigs between December 2012 and December 2013.

Scotland have revised their survey imputation methodology, leading to minor revisions to the estimates of UK pig numbers from 2007 onwards. The figures in table 3 have been updated as a result.

Figure 1: Total pig numbers on holdings, December 2009 – 2013

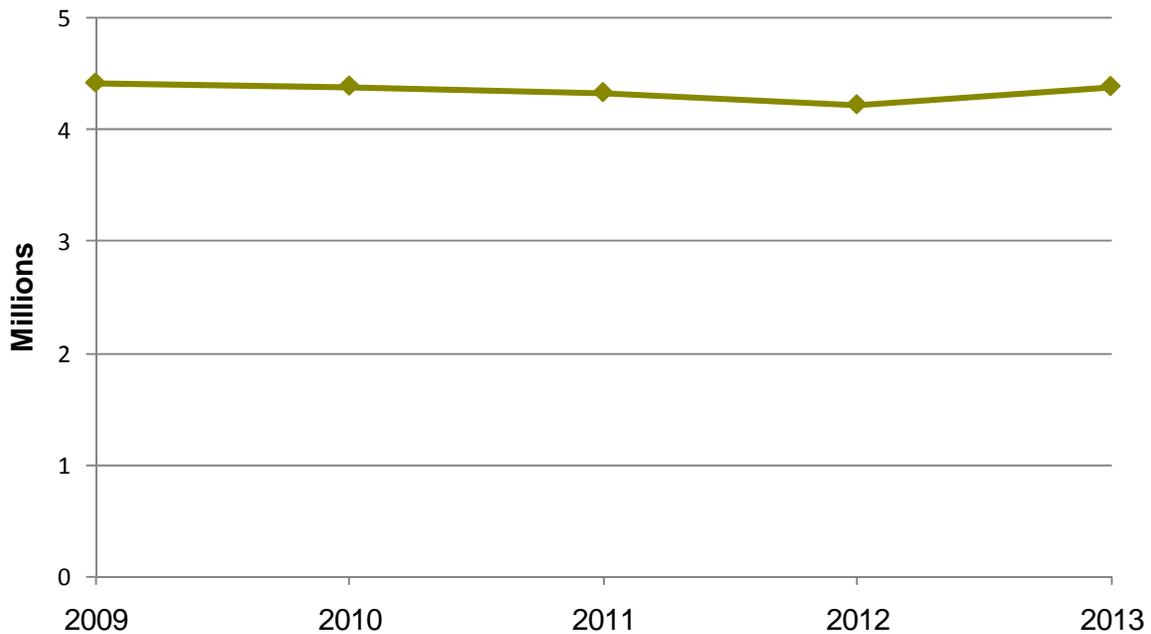


Table 3: Pigs on commercial agricultural holdings on 1 December

						thousands
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013 / 2012
Total pigs	4 416	4 388	4 328	4 216	4 383	4.0
Breeding pigs	495	508	499	509	497	-2.4
Female breeding herd	417	423	409	400	398	-0.6
Sows in pig	291	277	265	269	273	1.5
Gilts in pig	57	68	66	68	60	-11.3
Other sows	69	79	78	63	64	1.7
Other breeding pigs	78	85	90	109	99	-8.9
Boars being used for service	16	16	15	15	15	-2.9
Gilts intended for first time breeding	62	69	75	93	84	-9.8
Fattening pigs (incl. barren sows)	3 921	3 880	3 828	3 707	3 886	4.8

Sheep

The total number of sheep and lambs in the UK decreased by 1.6% between December 2012 and December 2013 to 22.6 million animals. The UK's female breeding flock increased by 4.0% to 14.8 million over the same period. A decrease in other sheep and lambs of 10.8% in the UK to 7.8 million animals explains the reduction in total sheep numbers during 2013.

Scotland have revised their survey imputation methodology, leading to minor revisions to the estimates of UK sheep numbers from 2007 onwards. The figures in table 4 have been updated as a result.

Figure 2: Total sheep and lambs, December 2009 – 2013

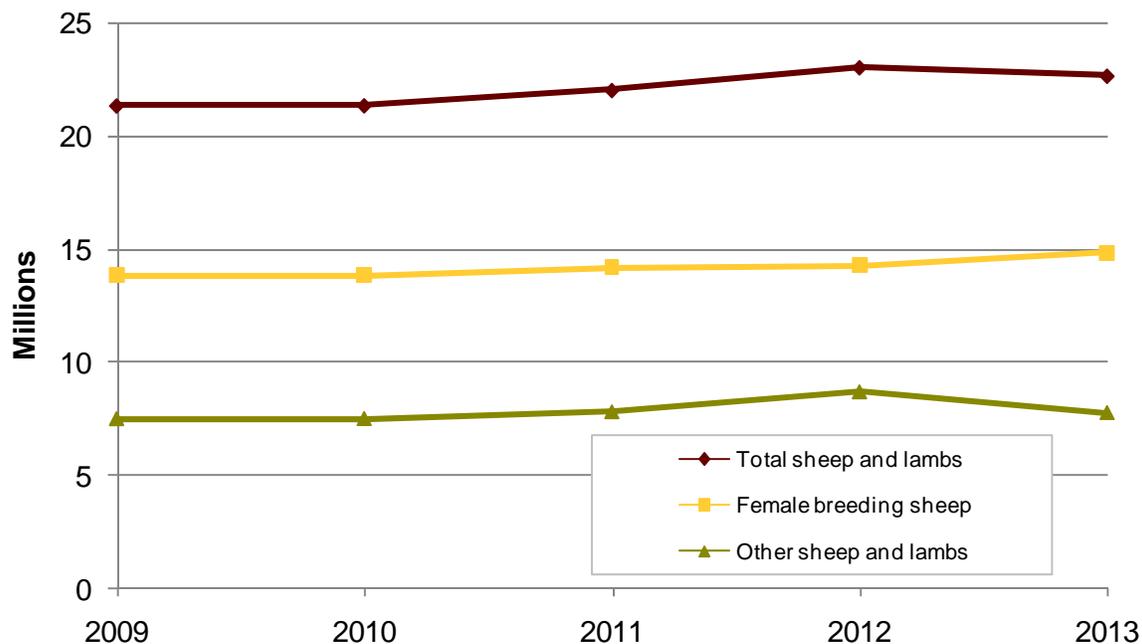


Table 4: Sheep and lambs on agricultural holdings on 1 December

	thousands					% change 2013 / 2012
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 ^(a)	
Total sheep and lambs	21 340	21 347	22 007	22 991	22 624	-1.6
Female breeding sheep	13 842	13 843	14 199	14 278	14 849	4.0
Other sheep and lambs	7 497	7 504	7 808	8 714	7 774	-10.8

(a) In 2013 Wales started using data from the annual Sheep and Goat Inventory (an annual exercise requiring all sheep and goat keepers to record animals under their keepership). Until 2012 sheep data was collected via the Welsh December survey of agriculture.

Methodological notes

All percentage changes in this release's tables are based on unrounded figures. Therefore, totals may not necessarily agree with the sum of their components due to rounding.

England

Livestock

Data for this 2013 December livestock publication comes from a number of different sources. Cattle data came from the Cattle Tracing System (an administrative system primarily set up for animal health monitoring purposes). Sheep data came from the annual Sheep and Goat Inventory (an annual exercise requiring all sheep and goat keepers to record animals under their keepership at 1 December). Pig data were gathered using 300 paper forms, achieving a response rate of 81%, so the results for pigs are subject to a degree of sampling error.

In CTS, the breed of the cattle is used to identify a breed purpose. Around 2% of all female cattle do not have an assigned breed purpose or are of dual breed. In all above cattle results, these cattle have been allocated to either dairy or beef at holding level based on the other cattle on the holding. Where there are no other cattle on the holding, they are allocated on the basis of the national split between dairy and beef in that age band.

Crops

Up until 2011, December crop area data for England was collected via an annual survey run by Defra. Following consultation, it was decided that the annual planting survey run each December by the Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA) would be a suitable alternative source of data. The removal of the Defra survey reduced duplication of effort and also excessive survey burden on the farmer. The England crop areas gathered by the HGCA are published on their website at:

<http://www.hgca.com/markets/survey-results.aspx>

The HGCA is a division of the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB). The AHDB is a statutory levy board who aim to make agriculture and horticulture industries more competitive and sustainable through factual, evidence-based advice.

Wales

Until 2012 sheep numbers were collected via the Welsh December survey of agriculture. In 2013 the sheep data was sourced for the first time from the Welsh Sheep and Goats Inventory, which is an annual exercise requiring all sheep and goat keepers to record animals under their keepership as at 1 January. The Inventory figures are adjusted to take account of the number of sheep slaughtered during December in order to produce an equivalent figure. Cattle data are taken from the Cattle Tracing System (an administrative system primarily set up for animal health monitoring purposes).

No individual figures have yet been published for Wales, but it is anticipated that they will be shortly. When available they will be found on the Welsh Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/?lang=en>

Scotland

The December agricultural survey is based on a sample of main holdings and covers pigs, sheep and crops. From a population of around 24,700 main holdings, 14,900 holdings were sampled and 10,550 responses received, giving a response rate of 71 per cent. Estimates are made for non-responses. For 2013, the trending methodology has been refined to provide improved estimates for holdings that reported farming a particular crop or livestock item in either the December survey or June Census

only. This provides improved estimates for those crop and livestock categories where a sizeable number of holdings had started or stopped farming the item between the December survey and the previous June Census (e.g. barley or turkeys). The previous method will have partially suppressed these trends. Cattle data for all holdings is obtained from the Cattle Tracing System for the first time this year. These changes have been back dated to 2007.

Final results for Scotland were published on 19 March 2014 by the Scottish Government, Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services, Q Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD (e-mail agric.stats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) and are available on the internet at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubFinalResultsDecCensus>

Northern Ireland

The 2013 December Survey conducted in Northern Ireland was a sample survey targeted at 4,972 farms, 3,921 forms were returned, a 79% response rate. Estimates are made for non-responses. This survey covered pigs, crops and heifer numbers. All other information relating to cattle was taken from the APHIS (Animal and Public Health Information System) database, while data on sheep was taken from the Annual Sheep and Goat Inventory, each of these being a census of animal numbers. The APHIS database is a central register maintained by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland. It is a live database containing individual cattle records and details for associated herds and keepers.

Final results for Northern Ireland were published on 27 February 2014 by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland, Dundonald House, Belfast, BT4 3SB (telephone: Belfast (02890) 525450) and are available online at: www.dardni.gov.uk/december-agricultural-survey-results